(c) A new category of visa called "Medical Visa" has been introduced by Government of India, which can be given to foreign tourists coming to India for medical treatment. Patients from over 55 countries are treated at Indian hospitals.

Formulation of Heritage Act

3308. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that experts from Britain, France and other countries are showing interest in documenting the heritage sites in Karnataka;

(b) whether Government have any plans to bring a legislation for the protection and conservation of heritage building and sites;

(c) whether powers are proposed to be delegated to the State Governments to decide on the renovation and protection of heritage structures; and

(d) whether Government have any plan to bring Bidar, Gulbarga, Bijapur, Kittur, Mysore, Srirangapatna, Kudalasangama, Kaginele and other areas under the heritage areas?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) No, Sir.

However, the Hampi Foundation, an NGO has documented Chandramaleshwara Temple, protected by the Government of Karntaka with assistance from USA based Global Heritage Fund, and Krishna Temple, a centrally protected monument with assistance from World Monument Fund (USA) .

(b) There is an existing legislation—Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1958 for protection and conservation of ancient monuments and sites. Besides Government also proposes to bring in a legislation to set up a Heritage Sites Commission.

(c) Different States Governments have enacted their own legislations for protection and conservation of ancient monuments and sites. The Karnataka State Government has enacted Karnataka Ancient Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1961.

(d) The State Government of Karnataka has declared Bidar,

Gulbarga, Bijapur, Kittur, Mysore and Srirangapatna as heritage cities/ centres.

Financial Assistance to Cultural Heritage Projects

3309. SHRI N.R. GOVINDRAJAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any special projects to preserve culture heritage in the country;

(b) whether Government have received any proposal from various State Governments for preservation of cultural heritage;

(c) whether Government are giving financial assistance to State Government's cultural heritage project; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The mandate of Department of Culture is to support through its Schemes and Institutions, the preservation of cultural heritage of the country. Archaeological Survey of India protects selected monuments. The National Archives is the custodian of public records. The National Akademies, the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (Bhopal), the National Manuscripts Mission and other institutions are engaged in preservation of heritage. Besides, a special project like the National Mission on Built Heritage and Antiquities has been sanctioned. Over and above this, the Department of Culture supports individual and voluntary organizations to pursue their activities meant to foster the cultural heritage of the country.

(b) and (c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Setting up of Hiuen Tsang Memorial at Nalanda in Bihar

3310. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal under Government's consideration to set up a Hiuen Tsang Memorial at Nalanda in Bihar during 2006, which is China-India Friendship year; and

(b) if so, the details in regard thereto and the extent to which